



Jan. 20, 2012

My hope is that everyone stayed safe and dry this week during Puget Sound's "snowmageddon." Our marine highways operated as normal and I want to recognize WSF employees who went the extra mile to get to work, and in some cases stay longer, to cover a co-worker who could not make it – I thank you and I know our customers appreciated it.

Snow is not the only thing that 2012 brings, but the opportunity for important change for the ferry system. As the Legislative session began, both [Gov. Gregoire](#) and [Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond](#) presented information on the shortfalls in funding and the necessity to support our declining transportation infrastructure – our marine highways are a critical piece of that system. The good news is that this crisis can be averted should the Legislature adopt the preservation and maintenance transportation package proposed by the governor. This is the most important priority for the 2012 session. However, if we want to keep the ferry system we have into the future and build new vessels to replace our aging ones, we need to obtain funding for new investments. I am hopeful that the Legislature will pass the governor's proposed transportation package and submit a new investment package for voter consideration this fall.

The most immediate and long-term goal for the ferry system clearly is sustainable funding, but there are other important short-term objectives that I have set forth, including:

- Move forward on important innovations, such as implementing the first phase of a [vehicle reservation system](#) and completing a security plan for liquefied natural gas as a potential fuel source for ferries.
- Engage ferry system employees in dialogue on system improvements.
- Complete the first new [144-car vessel](#) on time and within budget.
- Complete the environmental process for the [Seattle terminal](#) and [Mukilteo terminal](#) projects.
- Increase ridership through improved customer service and [marketing](#).
- Establish improved relationships with captains as management's representatives on the vessels.
- Continue cost containment and efficiency measures by building upon the \$40 million annual savings we've already achieved.

Our overall [mission](#) remains intact: to provide safe, reliable ferry service and exceptional customer service both on and off the water, through the work of our respected and valued employees. As customers, community members and employees, please help us meet our goals for 2012 and demonstrate what it means to be a world-class ferry system.